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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates some of the underlying assumptions prevalent in much of the research concerning the language patterns of black children and compares two competing research approaches: the deficit model, which assumes that black children from the ghetto hear very little language, much of it ill-formed, and that they are impoverished in their verbal expression; and the "difference" model, which holds that socially subordinate societies and language varieties are self-contained systems, neither inherently superior nor deficient. Also contained in this paper is an exploratory study of the Bernstein hypothesis, which pertains to restricted and elaborated language codes. This exploratory study observes college students and operationalizes slang as an instance of the restricted code. A statistically significant difference was found between the number of greetings given in the highest context condition and those given in the lowest context condition and between the number of slang phrases used in the highest context condition and those used in the lowest context condition. The findings suggest that context may be an important condition to include in a study that attempts to investigate language systems. (Author/RB)

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SOME OF THE ASSUMPTIONS IN RESEARCH ON BLACK CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE PATTERNS

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SOME OF THE ASSUMPTIONS IN RESEARCH ON BLACK CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE PATTERNS

This paper will attempt to explicate some of the underlying assumptions that are extant in much of the research concerning the language patterns of black children. Although there is little research in this area, the hypotheses and categorical conclusions evident would give one a quite different impression. It is this tendency among researchers I would like to investigate.

Because there are no systematic and detailed longitudinal studies of the linguistic development of black children comparable to the studies on white children done by Brown and Bellugi (1964), Braine (1963), etc., it would be difficult to specify the purported stages of linguistic development in any precise and detailed chronological sequence. Most of the research in this area has been done with black adolescent boys, concentrating on eight and nine year olds (Dale, 1972).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM DEFINITION

Included is a brief discussion of problem definitions. The way problems are defined invariably leads to the kind of interpretations one makes from research.

(1) How a problem is defined determines what is to be done about it. The problem definition determines the strategy of change, the standards for evaluation and the choice of social change arrangements. Moreover, these definitions are based on assumptions about the causes of the problem and where they exist.* For example, if it can be demonstrated that the use of nonstandard speech interferes with the ability to mediate thought and is the cause of inadequate performance on formal academic trials, then such a "person-blame" explanation would obviate pressure being applied to the educational system for structural and institutional change to raise the educational level of individuals from "verbally deficient" backgrounds.

(2) Definitions once legitimated, the validity of which is incidental, are highly resistant to displacement by other definitions. If intervention (through various

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*A caveat is in order. Causality is a very complex concept, and certainly cannot adequately be explained by the implied model. A model which states the more one kind of causal factor is shown to operate, the less the other kind is presumed to operate in producing a certain effect. Such a model is presented to illustrate a point.

techniques and programs) does not succeed, the problem definition and/or the social change mechanisms are rarely the blame. Rather, the responsibility for failure may be avoided by attributing the blame to the isolated group. Additionally, most definitions that are widely accepted are those that confrom to and buttress the dominant cultural myths and taboos. For example, looking within the individual for explanations of human behavior is a striking characteristic of American culture. It may be a consequence of the Puritan heritage--the rich credited with being "self-made," the poor are held to be "lazy." (McLeod and Chaffee, 1973) Skinner (1971) argues that his theory of operant conditioning through reinforcement has run into difficulties particularly because of this prevalent and popular tendency to attribute both "blame" and "credit" for human behavior to the person's psyche.

(3) Lastly, any adequate program evaluation presupposes an explicit and exact diagnosis of the problem. If remedial programs fail to produce intended effects, it may be highly unlikely to know the reasons for failure. There are several possibilities: limited modifiability of the population, or the level of intensity was inadequate to produce an effect. Or the treatment program was inappropriate because it was based on fallacious problem definitions and incorrect assumptions about the causal factors involved (Caplan and Nelson, 1973).

To gain a better understanding of studies on the language development of the black child, it would be useful to recognize the postulates that social science research has brought to bear on blacks as a group. Typically, it is postulated that an idealized norm of "American behavior" exists to which all behavior is to be compared. Operationally, as Baratz and Baratz (1970) assert, the norm is defined in terms of the way white middle-class Americans ostensibly behave. The normative conception intersects with the contemporary social ideology--the equalitarian principle--which asserts that under the law all people are created equal and accordingly should be treated as such from a moral and political point of view. The ideology, however, equates equality with sameness. Hence, the social scientist has tended to explain the behavior of blacks, not on its own terms, but to the extent to which it deviates from the normative system defined by the white middle class (Baratz, S., and Baratz, J.).

To do well in a school situation, a situation where the normative view is conspicuously present, there are many verbal skills which children from slum areas must learn, and indeed some of these verbal skills are characteristic of middle class verbal behavior. That is, precision in spelling, the ability to state explicitly the meaning of words and the ability to handle abstract symbols may all be useful acquisitions.

Labov (1970a, p. 63) posed the question ..."Is it true that all of the middle-class verbal habits are functional and desirable in the school situation?" What aspects of the verbal style of middle-class children are useful for the major work of analyzing and generalizing? What aspects are stylistic or even dysfunctional? Before imposing the middle-class verbal styles on other cultural groups, it would seem that answers to these questions are crucial.

Based on his research in various speech communities, Labov (1970a, p. 164) concludes that in a number of ways working-class speakers are more effective narrators, reasoners and debators than many middle-class speakers who are credited with losing their arguments in a mass of irrelevant detail.

MODELS USED TO EXPLAIN LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF BLACK CHILDREN

The social pathology and the genetic inferiority models are two longstanding traditions in the social science literature on blacks. The social pathology model postulates that something is wrong with the black American, and this something is transmitted by the family. On the other hand, the genetic inferiority model postulates that something is wrong with the genetic code of blacks. Although the genetic model has generally been replaced by the social pathology model, the major difference in the two lies in the attribution of causality, not in the analysis of the behavior observed as sick, pathological, deviant, or underdeveloped (Baratz, S. and Baratz, J. 1970). From the social pathology perspective, Hunt (1968) writes of the parents of black children:

> These parents themselves have often failed to utilize prepositional relationship with precision, and their syntax is confused. Thus, they serve as poor linguistic models for their young children (Hunt, 1968, p. 31).

Green (1964) affords us another example:

> The very inadequate speech that is used in the home is also used in the neighborhood, in the play group, and in the class room. Since these poor English patterns are reconstructed constantly by the associations that these young people have, the school has to play a strong role in bringing about a change in order that these young people can communicate more adequately in our society (Green, 1964, p. 123).

The ethnocentric bias have led these researchers to wrongly presume that linguistic competence and development of standard English are synonymous. Thus, they misinterpret the different, yet highly abstract and complex, non-standard vernacular used by blacks as evidence of linguistic incompetence or underdevelopment (Baratz, J., 1969). There is a presumption that any linguistic system other than standard English is deficient and inferior.

The social pathology and genetic inferiority models are often discussed in reference to language, as the verbal deficiency model. It states, in essence:

> Because black children from the ghetto hear very little language, much of it ill-formed, they are impoverished in their means of verbal expression. They cannot formulate complete sentences: they speak in "giant words." They do not know the names of common objects, they lack crucial concepts, and they cannot produce or comprehend logical statements. Sometimes, they are even reported to have no language at all (Dale, 1970, p. 249).

Investigators such as Labov and Cohen (1967) in Harlem and Eddington and Claudia Mitchell in San Francisco and Oakland have recorded natural interaction. They found that black lower-income speakers are highly verbal in terms of speech frequency. Adolescents and children engage in verbal games with great skill. Moreover, the researchers argued that these games have a complex tradition. In sum, controlled situations may, in fact, obscure the very skills which have been most developed within a particular group.

The current linguistic data which take into consideration the speech community of the speaker do not support the deficit model. The linguistic competence of black

children has been documented in a number of recent investigations (Dillard, 1967; Stewart, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1968; Bailey, 1965, 1968; Labov and Cohen, 1967; Labov, 1969; Baratz, 1969). Many lower-income black children speak a well-ordered, highly structured, but different dialect from that of standard English.

The notion that black children cannot produce or comprehend logical statements is taken up by Labov. He maintains that American school teachers have spent a great deal of time correcting a small number of nonstandard English rules to their standard equivalents, under the impression that they were teaching logic. This view has been reinforced and given theoretical justification by the claim that Nonstandard Black English (NBE)* is devoid of the means to express logical thought (Labov, 1970a).

If there is a possibility that black children do not operate with the same logic the middle-class adults display, this would inevitably mean the sentences of a certain grammatical form would have different truth values for the two different speakers. Looking at such a difference in the handling of the double negative (one of the items purportedly exemplifying the illogical thought of black children's speech), Labov indeed, found a difference. Extracting from his summarization, a few examples of the difference can be shown:

	STANDARD ENGLISH	NONSTANDARD ENGLISH
Positive	He knows something	He know something
Negative	He doesn't know anything	He don't know nothing
Double Negative	He doesn't know nothing	He don't know nothing

Labov concludes from this array, that the only difference between the two dialects is in superficial form. A regularity he notices is that when a single negative is found in the deep structure, standard English converts SOMETHING to the indefinite ANYTHING, (NBE) converts it to NOTHING. When speakers want to signal the presence of two negatives, they do it the same way. No one would have any difficulty constructin

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*It should be noted that all blacks in America today are not speakers of the black dialect. Nonetheless, there is a direct correlation between those who are not and their interaction and identification with white Americans. When a group of people are regarded and treated as a collective whole by the dominant culture, then the group's language takes on a racial identification.

the same truth tables for both dialects. The "logical" forms of current standard English are simply the accepted conventions of our present-day formal style (Labov, 1970a, p. 175).

Alluding to the "language retardation" of ghetto children, Bereiter maintains:

> By the time they are five years old, disadvantaged children of almost every kind are typically one or two years retarded in language development. This is supported by virtually any index of language one cares to look at (Bereiter, p. 196).

Thus, the statement by a black lower income child HE NICE, a correspondence to the past tense standard English's HE's NICE, is considered to be a primitive standard approximation and equivalent to the absence of copula at a particular stage of standard English development.

NBE is among several languages and dialects which have a zero copula in the present tense; however, no meaning is lost. An identity statement is just as permissable in this dialect as any other language or dialect. The ability or inability to conceptualize has no relation to form (Wolfram, 1972).

Although utilizing the deficit model, Entwisle provides evidence (paradigmatic responses to adjective, verbs, pronouns, adverbs as well as primary responses to nouns, a measure independent of others) which suggest that the first grade white slum children are more advanced in linguistic development than suburban children of the same intelligence level. Moreover, the black first graders performed just as well as the suburban children of the same intelligence levels. She concludes, "To find slum children superior is both unanticipated and exciting because it raises important questions about cultural deprivation and also about the role of cultural factors in every linguistic development" (Entwistle, 1968, p. 47).

DIFFERENCE MODEL

In direct opposition to the deficiency models is the difference model. This model postulates that socially subordinate societies and language varieties are self-contained systems, neither inherently superior nor deficient. This view particularly

characterizes the view of the linguist. To them, the term, "primitive" languages is analogous to the term "unicorn" languages, i.e., there are no such things. Language, according to the linguist, is a well-ordered system with a predictable sound pattern, grammatical structure and vocabulary. Furthermore, any verbal system used by a community is a language, and no language is structurally better than another.

The linguists are in agreement with the above statement but they are not always in agreement with the exact nature of differences and why a particular feature exists. What follows are some of the syntactic differences between the two systems--NNE (NBE) and Standard English (Baratz, 1970, p. 16).

VARIABLE	STANDARD ENGLISH	NEGRO NONSTANDARD
Linking Verb	He is going	He. . .goin'
Possessive Marker	John's cousin	John. . .cousin
Plural Marker	I have five cents	I got five cent...
Verb Agreement	He runs home	He run. . .home
If Construction	I asked if he did it.	I ask did he do it.
Preposition	He is over at his friend's house.	He over to his friend house.
Be	He is here all the time.	He be here.

Indeed, the dichotomy between the deficient and difference models may be rather simplistic, but it provides a useful framework for theoretical approaches to nonstandard dialects. This distinction has certain practical importance. For instance, if one merely considers nonstandard dialects to be undeveloped approximations to standard English, one may overlook important structural facts about the nature of these dialects.

MEASURES OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOR OF BLACK CHILDREN

It has been intimated throughout this paper that subjective evidence and misconceptions have resulted in a distorted and inadequate view of the language behavior of black children. Yoder contends that there is no overwhelming evidence that children from poverty populations have highly serious problems in articulatory development... (Yoder, 1970, p. 403). The evidence that does exist, he points out, is susceptible to problems of sampling and description. He argues further that our testing procedures

and instruments sometimes reveal...ethnic and social-class differences in language rather than distinctions in the speech capabilities or development of children (Yoder, p. 403).

Severson and Guest (1970) also speak of the paucity of objective information on standardized language behaviors of both advantaged and disadvantaged subcultural groups. They posed the question of how standardized assessment of the language of disadvantaged children should be approached.

Their answer can be summarized as:

1. We need increased sensitivity to the different goals and criteria pertinent to standardized testing, and their application to language behavior.
2. Extratest factors, which affect test results and interpretations, loom as particularly influential in the case of disadvantage populations.
3. A substantial and concerted effort is needed to develop standardized procedures for language assessment and to increase our knowledge of how language capabilities fit into the larger context of an individual's other abilities and his environment (Severson and Guest, 1970, p. 329).

They concluded that the utility of published findings and the current use of standardized language tests with disadvantaged children should be viewed with considerable skepticism.

LANGUAGE AND COGNITION

Baratz (1969) maintains that there have been two major sources of influence on researchers working in the area of cognitive abilities of black children---the Piaget cognitive developmental formation and Basil Bernstein's ideas on restricted and elaborated codes.

There has been a tendency, according to Baratz, to take Piaget's development formulation as a total definition of cognition and to equate it with rationality. Greenfield and Bruner (1966) stated that this approach, concerning cross-cultural studies, has depicted development lag primarily through a tacit acceptance of white

control group norms. This shortcoming militates against the quality of much of the research.

The other major source*--the Bernstein hypothesis (a socio-linguistic approach)--will be the topic of the exploratory research to follow. Before going any further, it should be made clear that knowledge of the cognitive correlates of grammatical differences is certainly in its embryonic stage. The assumption that language style plays a predominant role in thinking continues to be a controversial claim (Labov, 1970a; Dale, 1972).

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY--THE BERNSTEIN HYPOTHESIS

In the United States the Bernstein hypothesis pertaining to restricted and elaborated language codes has acquired a considerable amount of research interest. Bernstein, a British sociologist, has attempted to answer the question: Why do groups of different social strata tend to use language differently?

Initially, the distinction between the elaborated and restricted language codes was observed in British citizens of the working and middle socio-economic class. In this sense, Bernstein proposes a demographic explanation for language differences.

The restricted code was a mode of speech observed in situations where speaker and listener shared experiences. This sharing of experiences allowed speech to be truncated, abbreviated, and/or implied. There was an emphasis on the HOW of the speech as well as the WHAT. The typical use of this variety of speech was among persons who knew each other well. That is, the linkage between speaker and listener was as important as the topic of discourse.

On the other hand, aside from linguistic knowledge, the elaborated code did not require a great amount of shared experiences between speaker and listener. The meaning of an utterance was made explicit by the use of detailed language. According to this formulation, the speech in the elaborated code had a wide range of linguistic

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*Basil Bernstein has considerably modified his views concerning the relationship of linguistic codes and conceptual development. Additionally, he has reprimanded those who misrepresented his conceptualization of restricted and elaborated codes. For a more recent explication of his ideas ("A Sociolinguistic Approach to Socialization: with some Reference to Educability," in F. Williams, Language and Poverty, Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970, pp. 25-61).

alternatives. The elaborated code, in contrast to the restricted code, can transcend the communication context. It can be understood by an outsider who has no familiarity with the discussants.

Hymes (1967, p. 12) states that the elaborated codes are largely 'now-coding', adaptive in lexicon and syntax to the ad hoc elaboration of subjective intent, whereas restricted codes are largely 'then-coding', adaptive to the reinforcement of group solidarity through group expression.

Stated succinctly, the restricted code is status-oriented; the elaborated code is person-oriented.

A premature correspondence has been formulated between the diagnosis of the American who speaks a nonstandard dialect of English and Bernstein's concept of a restricted code. The United States has an ethnic group differentiation in addition to social dialect differentiation among socially stratified groups (Williams, 1972). Therefore, I submit that the distinction between restricted and elaborated code as defined by Bernstein may be severely modified in the United States. It may be the case that groups vary in reference to a Black dialect or Spanish dialect as a primary language.

These can be empirically tested. The purpose of this research is to raise some questions concerning the applicability of the Bernstein hypothesis in its most frequently employed form as well as to offer a possible addition to this formulation.

Some researchers have applied Bernstein's restricted code distinction to the lower socioeconomic classes in the United States, particularly to the so-called "disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived," among inner-city populations. The interest in this population has crossed a number of different disciplines--sociology, psychology, education, speech linguistics, and communication (Williams, 1972). Views within and between different disciplines have often come into sharp conflict with one another about the speech of this lower-socio-economic class, especially in reference to blacks. Moreover, some contemporary views of the variety of English have challenged basic linguistics and socio-linguistic premises about the nature of language.

Bernstein (1961) hypothesized that a child who could use only a restricted code would have less differentiated perception and conceptualization of his environment. This portion of his theory has been particularly controversial and entirely without empirical support. Whiting and Hitt, in an exploratory study, extrapolating from this Bernstein hypothesis to a puzzle solving task given to Chicanos, American Indians, and Blacks found no differences. Using white middle class subjects as the comparison group (deficit model), they were baffled by the outcome. They concluded, "if restricted codes constitute a permanent bar to the learning of abstract concepts, our subjects must have been anomalies (Whiting and Hitt, 1972, p. 73).

The question of whether the use of a restricted code is an indication of limited ability or a case of preference in a defined setting is a perplexing and complex problem. It can always be claimed that difference in code usage is due to the experimental settings, the claim is difficult to deny. In the case where interest and motivation is high, as in planning a boycott for example, lower SES speakers may use an elaborated code. Research on this question is sparse. Bernstein in his present work does not offer a very adequate answer either. Bernstein's colleagues (Brandis and Henderson) recognize the contextual dependence of linguistic usage. They point out that this concern is a focal variable in their research, and a major problem for their methodology Stating the problem briefly, objectively standardized conditions in experiments may produce varied stimuli for different groups of children. This problem is accentuated in the case of a subordinate group within a society--Blacks, Chicanos, etc. (See Rosenhan, 1966).

THE BERNSTEIN SCHEME PLUS CONTEXT

The context principle or shared context principle is a term coined by Erickson to specify an intervening factor between social class and language style. Erickson asserts, using Bernstein's terminology, that "when two communicators share considerable experience and point of view, a restricted linguistic code can function as precisely as an elaborated code" (Erickson, 1972, p. 22).

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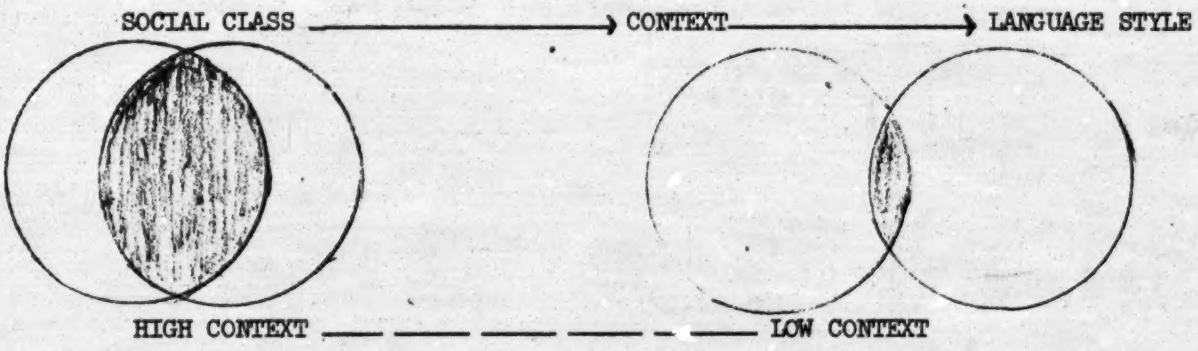
Thus, high context communication (restricted code) is adequate when there is considerable overlap of experience between communicators. Low context communication (elaborated code) is adequate when there is little shared experience.

Shared context, then, can be viewed as a continuum, high shared context at one end and low shared context at the other. Adopting Erickson's schema it may be illustrated as follows:

FIGURE 1.



SLANG

Newman (Hymes, 1964) has pointed out that since slang is highly transitory by definition, it will be understood in a given sense only within the groups or networks where it developed or to which it has moved at a given time. Thus, one might predict that the selection rules for slang should restrict it to addresses to whom one claims a solidarity relation. This can be viewed in high shared context terms.

TOPIC

The topic of discussion also seems to be an important variable. This variable can be the accelerator of communication activity. It is assumed that the more important the topic to the group as a whole the more communication activity will develop, whether the language code used is restricted or elaborated.

What follows is an attempt to include some of the preceding variables into a research framework.

PROCEDURE

There were several kinds of greetings coded. These greetings were:

1) what it is?

2) what's happening?

3) salaam alaikum

4) habari gani

5) power handshake

6) power symbol

7) hello

8) how are you?

9) hi

The various greetings were subsumed under three categories of greetings--contemporary non-traditional, traditional. Under the contemporary category the greetings included:

1) what it is?

2) what's happening?

The traditional category included:

1) hello

2) how are you?

3) hi

Finally, the non-traditional category included:

1) salaam alaikum

2) habari gani

3) power handshake

4) power symbol

In addition to the various greetings, the coding scheme contained a category of:

1) number of slang expressions

2) frequency of sentence utterance which were coded from each complete speech sequences. Each individual could speak several times within the alloted time limit.

3) gestures by the speaker during conversation. Gestures were coded as movements made by hands only while the respondents were talking. These movements were coded only if the hands were extended in a noticeable manner, such as pointing extending the palms, etc. Gestures such as tapping on the desk while conversing, squeezing the hands while talking were not included.

4) to whom conversation was directed--the coding for this category is self-explanatory. This category was included to give an idea of how often the students communicated among one another.

The first three categories were treated separately in one instance. In the other instances, they were combined to make up the higher order operationalization termed "involvement."

Slang was the operationalization of the restricted code.

The coding exercise was conducted using three different samples. The first sample was composed of black students from the journalism department of the University of Wisconsin who were attending a bi-monthly meeting. These meetings were held in order to give the students a forum to discuss the problems confronting them in the department. However, there were often meetings in which students came together to discuss issues that pertained to black students in general. The meeting I attended was one such instance. The topic of discussion was: Should there be several ethnic cultural centers on campus or should there be just one housing the various ethnic groups?

The second sample was composed of students in a discussion section of a University of Wisconsin course in "The Biological and Medical Aspects of Race." The class was composed of all black students. The topic of discussion was: Is the I.Q. test a valid and reliable test in evaluating the achievement of blacks? What are some of the current views on this issue?

The third sample was composed of students attending a discussion section of a University of Wisconsin course in "Contemporary Afro-American Culture." This time, however, the class was composed of both blacks (5) and whites (4).

The topic of discussion was similar to that in the second sample: Is the I.Q. test meaningful to black folks?

The samples will be subsequently referred to as samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

The greetings were coded as individuals entered the room. They were given a specific time limit (one minute after entrance) to greet others in the room. Within this period, each greeting given was coded.

The coding for the remaining categories was done during the discussion period.

	TOPIC	
	CULT. CTR.	I.Q.
ALL BLACK	GR. 1	GR. 2
BLACK AND WHITE	X	GR. 3

SHARED CONTEXT

The first sample was considered to be the highest context condition. In this condition, the respondents were assumed to have a higher overlap of experiences. First, because they were responding to particular issues as a group, which was a rather common experience. Secondly, they were all in the school of journalism and some of them have had contact in their various journalism classes.

The second sample was also considered to be a condition of high context. This designation was given because all the students were of the same ethnic background discussing a topic of ostensible mutual interest. The overlap of experiences are of a broader variety than the situation described in the first sample; hence, the shared experiences are assumed to be less.

The third sample, although also considered a high context condition, is assumed to be less than in the other two samples. This sample being composed of an integrated group (black and whites), I would assume that they would have fewer shared experiences. Moreover, I would think that the extent of the shared experiences would not be readily manifest because of the controversial nature of the topic. Caution would seem to be the mode.

The only situation that may be considered to be quite different from the others is the sample 1 condition. In this condition the statuses of the communicants and the teacher may be thought to be more similar. Since the students were not being rated or evaluated and did not have to remember the information for a later test, I would assume the communication would be less constrained. This lack of constraint could possibly lead to a more relaxed language, which I consider slang to be. Furthermore, I think this atmosphere would lead to more "involvement."

The research question can be posed: Is slang, an instance of the restricted code, more prevalent in certain situations? Is involvement more prevalent in certain conditions?

From the aforementioned assumptions, one would expect:

1) there are a greater number of slang expressions used in the highest context condition than in the other high context conditions.
2) there is a greater involvement in the highest context than in the other high context conditions.
3) there are a greater number of greetings given in the highest context condition than in the other conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows a statistically significant difference between sample 1, the highest context condition, and sample 3, the lowest context condition* ($p < .05$). This table suggests that the people greeted each other more as the context increased. The greetings given in sample 2, although not showing a statistically significant difference, is in the hypothesized direction.

Involvement (number of slang expressions, frequency of sentence sequence and gestures during conversation) did not show any statistical differences in the different context conditions. Looking at table 2 and 3, it is apparent, however, that the differences are in the hypothesized direction ($p < .10$).

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*All of the statistical tests were computed using a one-tailed t test.

Slang, operationalized as one aspect of the restricted code, showed a significant difference between the highest context condition and the lowest context condition ($p < .025$). And although the difference between the highest context condition (sample 1) and the next highest context condition (sample 2) is not statistically significant ($p < .10$), again the difference is in the predicted direction as shown in table 4.

If the various context conditions are thought to lie on a continuum, sample 1, the highest, and sample 3, the lowest, it can be said that the predictions were upheld, on the involvement variable. The highest context condition and the next context condition, sample 2, did not show a statistically significant difference for any of the variables. It may be the case that the difference did not emerge because of the close similarity in the two samples. However, on each variable the direction of difference was successfully predicted. The non-significance of the involvement variable may suggest that context makes little difference for involvement. It may be that the kind of speech (slang) is a more adequate indicant of the communication activity in the context conditions, i.e., what is said rather than the amount (frequency) and the manner (gestures) of speech. This distinction, however, does not apply for greetings, where the number of greetings makes a difference in the context conditions rather than the kind of greeting given.

In summary, these findings suggest that context, as defined in this study and suggested by Erickson, may be an important condition to include in a study that attempts to investigate language systems. Moreover, the finding suggests that this condition may be important in understanding the speech systems not only between different groups (cross-culturally), but also within groups.

This study was an exploratory one, hence should be viewed as being suggestive of some possible areas that may yield fruit.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER THEORIES

The tentative and preliminary research embodied in this paper purposely avoids reference to social class and ethnic differences, per se. An unfortunate spin-off

of research on social class and ethnic differences (as is the typical approach taken by American researchers using the Bernstein hypothesis) is that it focuses attention upon discrepancies between groups and ignores the areas of overlap and similarity. This tendency results in a distorted and partial picture and impedes the development of adequate theory about the effects of cultural and social experience upon behavior.

A comprehensive analysis of the areas of contact between the external environment and human development and behavior should be the source of a theory of the influence of social class and ethnicity. This would preclude theory being based upon a body of research which deals in false dichotomies for the sake of methodological and conceptual convenience.

The arguments surrounding the employment of the deficit model or difference model has initiated much debate. One point, however, that is generally agreed upon is that studies of language functions should not simply reflect the predilection of the investigators. In short, subcultural relativity (as exemplified in the difference model) provides an essential perspective for objective analysis for any program of planned change.

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Table 1.

Number of People	Greetings Sample 1	Number of People	Greetings Sample 2	Number of People	Greetings Sample 3
1	2	1	2	1	0
2	1	2	1	2	0
3	2	3	0	3	0
4	1	4	2	4	0
5	2	5	0	5	1
6	3	6	0	6	2
7	2	7	2	7	0
8	4	8	0	8	0
9	2	9	0	9	0
10	1		$\bar{X}$=.78		$\bar{X}$=.33
11	0		P < .10		P < .05
	$\bar{X}$=1.82				

Table 2

Sample 1 Involvement					Sample 2 Involvement			
Number of People	Number of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utter.	Gestures During Conver.		Number of People	Number of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utter.	Gestures During Conver.
1	11	11	1		1		1111	11
2	1	111			2	1	111	1
3		11			3	1	11	1
4	1	1	1		4		1	1
5	1111	1111	111		5	1	1	1
6	11111	111	11111		6			
7	11	1111	11		7	1	1	1
8					8	1		
9					9		1	1
10		1	1					
11		1111	11111	$\bar{X}$=5.18				$\bar{X}$=2.89

P<.10

Table 3

Sample 1
Involvement

Number of People	Number of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utter.	Gestures During Conver.
1	11	11	1
2	1	111	
3		11	
4	1	1	1
5	1111	1111	111
6	11111	111	11111
7	11	1111	11
8			
9			
10		1	1
11		1111	11111

$\bar{X} = 5.18$

$P < .10$

Sample 3
Involvement

Number of People	Number of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utter.	Gestures During Conver.
1		11111	111
2	1	1	
3		11	1
4		11	1
5		1	1
6		1111	1
7			
8			
9		1	

$\bar{X} = 2.67$

Table 4

Number of People	Slang Sample 1	Slang Sample 2	Slang Sample 3
1	11		
2	1	1	1
3	1	1	
4			
5	1111	1	
6	11111		
7	11	1	
8		1	
9			
10			
11			
	$\bar{X} = 1.36$	$\bar{X} = .56$	$\bar{X} = .11$
		$P < .10$	$p < .025$

Greetings

	Contemporary		Non-Traditional				Traditional				Involvement			
# of People	What it is?	What's Happening	Salaam Alaikum	Habari Gani	Power Hand Shake	Power Symbol	Hello	How Are You	Hi	# of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utterance	Gestures During Conversation	To whom Conversation Directed	
1											11111	111	+	
2										1	1			
3											11	1		
4											11	1		
5		1									1	1		
6	1					1					1111	1		
7														
8														
9											1			
$\bar{X}$	.11	.11				.11				.11	1.77	.78		
	(1)	(1)				(1)				(1)	(16)	(7)		

Sample 1

	Greetings										Involvement		
	Contemporary		Non-Traditional				Traditional						
# of People	What it is?	What's Happening	Salaam Alaikum	Habari Gani	Power Hand Shake	Power Symbol	Hello	How Are You	Hi	# of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utterance	Gestures During Conversation	To whom Conversation Directed
1	1					1					1111	11	+++
2		1								1	111	1	
3										1	11	1	+
4								1	1		1	1	+
5										1	1	1	
6													
7	1								1	1	1	1	
8										1			
9											1	1	
$\bar{X}$	.22	.11					.11		.22	.56	1.44	.89	
	(2)	(1)					(1)		(2)	(5)	(13)	(8)	

Sample 2

Sample 3

	Greetings												
	Contemporary		Non-Traditional				Traditional			Involvement			
# of People	What it is?	What's Happening?	Salaam Alaikum	Habari Gani	Power Hand Shake	Power Symbol	Hello	How Are You	Hi	# of Slang	Freq. of Sent. Utterance	Gestures During Conversation	To Whom Conversation Directed
1		1							1	11	11	1	
2									1	1	111		
3		1					1				11		
4									1	1	1	1	
5		1							1	1111	1111	111	+
6	1				1	1				11111	111	11111	+
7		1				1				11	1111	11	+
8		1			1	1			1				
9	1								1				
10		1									1	1	+
11											1111	11111	+
$\bar{X}$	.18	.54			.18	.27	.09		.54	1.36	2.18	1.63	
	(2)	(6)			(2)	(3)	(1)		(6)	(15)	(24)	(18)	